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**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **LEADERSHIP CHANGES AT NATIONAL CENTRE FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES**

The **National Healthcare Group (NHG)** today announced that **Professor Leo Yee Sin**, Executive Director (ED) of the National Centre for Infectious Diseases (NCID), after six exceptional years at the helm of NCID, will be passing the leadership baton to **Professor Vernon Lee**.

Prof Vernon Lee, a public health specialist, is currently Senior Director, Communicable Diseases Division, in the Ministry of Health (MOH). He will be appointed ED-designate of NCID with effect from 1 May 2023, and will become its ED on 1 July 2023, when Prof Leo completes her leadership tenure on 30 June. Prof Lee will concurrently hold his MOH appointment.

Effective 1 July 2023, Prof Leo will be appointed Senior Consultant, MOH, and Senior Advisor, NHG where she will lend her wealth of expertise and experience in the area of Infectious Disease and outbreak management.

### **Distinguished Infectious Diseases Expert**

**Professor Leo Yee Sin** has since 1 July 2017 been instrumental in establishing NCID as the first of its kind institution, integrating clinical care, public health and professional development in areas such as research, training and education, and community outreach. Under her leadership, NCID successfully managed Singapore's first imported case of mpox in May 2019, responded swiftly to the fast-evolving global COVID-19 pandemic barely four months after NCID's official opening in September 2019, and also effectively managed the mpox outbreak in June 2022. Prof Leo also led in establishing the COVID-19 Research Workgroup to conduct impactful studies on COVID-19 transmission in Singapore. The Workgroup's findings have since brought about improved infection control methods, relevant public health policies, as well as diagnostic and treatment methods that benefit patients locally and worldwide.

As an Infectious Disease (ID) specialist, Prof Leo established the first HIV Programme in 1995 to provide equitable care and support to HIV patients. She also led teams through multiple outbreaks in Singapore. These included Nipah in 1999, SARS in 2003, the pandemic influenza in 2009, Zika in 2016, the COVID-19 pandemic and multiple surges of dengue. She has held numerous leadership roles including, Head of ID at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) in 2003, and Director of the Institute of Infectious Diseases in 2012. During the past two decades of her leadership, she has nurtured many junior colleagues to become leaders in their own field.

In the field of research, Prof Leo has published more than 400 peer-reviewed scientific papers. Topics of her research interest include dengue, influenza, emerging infections, HIV and COVID-19. With her experience and expertise in outbreak management, she is frequently invited to advise on and speak at national, regional and international platforms. She continues to serve as a key member in numerous committees and advisory boards locally and internationally, including

multiple World Health Organization (WHO) workgroups on outbreak management, and as an international expert in scientific and research bodies. Apart from her clinical and administrative duties, Prof Leo is also very involved in teaching, and training the next generation of medical students in future ID fields.

**Professor Philip Choo, Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO), NHG**, said, “Professor Leo Yee Sin embodies exemplary leadership characterised by dedication and compassion. On behalf of the NHG, I would like to extend our deepest appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to Prof Leo for her unwavering dedication and significant contributions to healthcare in Singapore and internationally. Our thanks also for her stewardship in establishing and helming NCID for the past six years, and together with the NHG Family in seeing us through COVID-19 to emerge stronger as one.”

Prof Leo’s successor as the Executive Director of NCID is Prof Vernon Lee, who has honed his illustrious career in public healthcare.

### **Leading Public Health Expert and Epidemiologist in Singapore’s Pandemic Preparedness**

**Professor Vernon Lee** is a public health physician with extensive global health experience in pandemic preparedness and response, infectious disease epidemiology and health policy and management. Formerly an Advisor to the Assistant Director General for Health, Security and Environment at the WHO headquarters; Medical Epidemiologist in the WHO Office in Indonesia; and the Head of the Biodefence Centre in the Singapore Armed Forces, Prof Lee has been involved in major global health security collaborations, and in developing pandemic preparedness plans, risk assessment and disease management programmes at the global and national levels. He continues to serve on expert committees at the international level.

For Singapore’s response to COVID-19, Prof Lee played an instrumental role in designing and implementing key national policies on preparedness and risk-management, helming whole-of-government responses and public health operations, in addition to advising the Multi-Ministry Taskforce on COVID-19. Over the past years, he was involved in Singapore’s response to the 2009 influenza pandemic, Zika, tuberculosis and other outbreaks. He also conducted epidemiological investigations for SARS in Singapore, and the avian flu outbreaks in Indonesia when he was seconded by MOH to the WHO. To prevent disease transmission, Prof Lee oversaw enhancements to Singapore’s national childhood immunisation schedule, and developed the national adult immunisation schedule. He was also involved in initiating the WHO’s anti-microbial resistance global action plan and is spearheading Singapore’s corresponding National Strategic Action Plan.

An avid educator and researcher, Prof Lee has published about 200 scientific papers, many in top journals, including the *New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)*, *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, and the *Lancet* journals. He is an Adjunct Professor at the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health.

**Professor Philip Choo, GCEO, NHG**, said, “On behalf of the NHG, I would like to congratulate Professor Vernon Lee on his new appointment as the Executive Director of NCID, and look forward to his leadership in building upon NCID’s capabilities to strengthen the delivery of clinical care, research and education of infectious diseases, public health services in Singapore when he takes the helm on 1 July this year.”

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## Glossary of Chinese Terms

<p>Professor Philip Choo Group Chief Executive Officer National Healthcare Group</p>	<p>朱伟仁教授 集团首席执行官 国立健保集团</p>
 <p>Professor Leo Yee Sin Executive Director National Centre for Infectious Diseases</p>	<p>梁玉心教授 主任 国家传染病中心</p>
 <p>Professor Vernon Lee Senior Director, Communicable Diseases Division Ministry of Health</p>	<p>李坚明教授 高级司长 卫生部传染病管理司</p>

### About the National Healthcare Group

The National Healthcare Group (NHG) is a leader in public healthcare in Singapore, recognised at home and abroad for the quality of its medical expertise and facilities. Care is provided through an integrated network of seven primary care polyclinics, acute care and tertiary hospitals, national specialty centres and business divisions. Together they bring a rich legacy of medical expertise to our philosophy of integrated patient-centred care.

NHG's vision is "Adding Years of Healthy Life". This vision goes beyond merely healing the sick to the more difficult and infinitely more rewarding task of preventing illness and preserving health and quality of life. With some 22,000 staff, NHG aims to provide care that is patient-centric, accessible, seamless, comprehensive, appropriate and cost-effective.

As the Regional Health Manager (RHM) for Central and North Singapore, it is vital for NHG to partner and collaborate with stakeholders, community advisors, and voluntary welfare organisations. Together with our patients, their families and caregivers, we aim to deliver integrated healthcare services and programmes that help in Adding Years of Healthy Life to all concerned.

More information is available at [www.nhg.com.sg](http://www.nhg.com.sg).